

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-12 are presently pending in this application, Claims 1, 3 and 6-12 having been amended by way of the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 9-12 were objected to; Claims 1-3, 6 and 8 were rejected as being anticipated by Tatsuno et al. (United States Patent Publication Number 2002/0051270 A1, referred to below as Tatsuno et al); and Claims 4, 5 and 7 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

Applicants appreciatively acknowledge the identification of allowable subject matter.

As for the rejection to Claims 1-3, 6 and 8, one of the applicants respectfully has submitted a declaration under 37 C.F.R. 1.131 showing that the actual reduction to practice of the present invention was accomplished at least before March 15, 2001, the effective filing date of Tatsuno et al, thus overcoming Tatsuno et al as prior art (please see paragraph number 3-9 in the declaration).

The declaration includes an attachment of a company-internal report dated February 1, 2001, bearing reference number S2000-0795 (please see paragraph number 4 in the declaration). The report states that the sample systems of the present invention were manufactured, experimented with and were recognized by the applicant to work very well (please see paragraph number 8 in the declaration). This declaration and attachment provide clear evidence to show the present invention was actually reduced to practice by the applicants at least before the effective filing date of Tatsuno et al.

Accordingly, in view of this evidence, Tatsuno et al. is no longer applicable as a basis for the rejection of the pending claims.

As for the objection to Claims 9-12, the claims have been amended to correct informalities.

Also, Claims 1, 3 and 6-8 have been amended to clarify that the claims are not to be interpreted under 35 U.S.C 112 sixth paragraph.

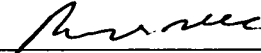
Consequently, the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance, and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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